

# Oral Statement by EuroHealthNet

Requested for Regional Committee 69<sup>th</sup>  
Session Provisional Agenda item 5 (h) on  
Health Literacy in the WHO European  
Region



EuroHealthNet, the European Partnership for health, equity and wellbeing, welcomes the proposed **Roadmap for implementation of health literacy initiatives through the life course**. We see the calls for action on *Promoting Health in the 2030 Agenda* as a means by which progress can be achieved and measured, regionally and globally. We are pleased that initiatives to implement the Shanghai Declaration are being actively taken forward by the Regional Office for Europe and Member States.

However, there is much to be done, in some cases urgently. As the Roadmap shows, only 19 European Member States are currently developing relevant policies, despite the definition of health literacy in the WHO health promotion glossary since 1998. That definition has of course partly been overtaken by developments and innovations. They offer both opportunities and challenges, which can be strongly addressed if the Roadmap is taken forward.

Now there is a new impetus which makes health literacy an even more dynamic determinant of health and equity: the digital transformation of societies and systems, including curative, therapeutic and preventive health and care, to which many citizens of the European Region have new rights. It is welcome that improving **digital health literacy** is among the five strategic directions in the Roadmap.

*Point 39* recognises this new dynamic and how integrated approaches are vital, including co-design throughout - from initiation through implementation to evaluation. *Point 41* highlights its importance on policy agendas, so we welcome the suggestions in *Point 43* for actions in all settings and to decrease inequalities and social exclusion. But we hope these will swiftly become more strengthened commitments, which can be effectively implemented and evaluated in the new partnerships being established, which are imperative for effectiveness.

EuroHealthNet has published our *Policy Precip* on “**Digital Health Literacy: How new Skills can help improve health, equity and sustainability**”. It includes stimulating examples from our partners plus recommendations on policies, protections, practices, public and professional engagements which have been developed by our experts and indicates how EU and other programmes can help.

The *Policy Precip* is available via our website [www.eurohealthnet.eu](http://www.eurohealthnet.eu) , plus other relevant outcomes on this subject which we have championed over many years. We are also publishing innovative new information on how to resource such initiatives, as a welcome part of the WHO Europe Coalition of Partners, via an **Investment Guide and Online Tool** for policymakers and practitioners. This is a vital aspect which is not yet sufficiently addressed in the Roadmap but can be improved.

We look forward to continuing to contribute towards these improvements and to successful outcomes for the Health Literacy Roadmap priorities.